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TREASURE STATE HEALTH

VOL XXII, No. 1 OFFICIAL BULLETIN — State Department of Health and Environmental Sciences, Helena, Montana 59601 January, 1973

Rubella Testing, Toy Safety Legislation Proposed

Legislation prepared by Health Department personnel points out the wide variety of health-related topics that are concerning Montanans this year.

Bills sent to the Legislature, if enacted, will upgrade enforcement of existing water and air pollution laws; outlaw dangerous toys and require labeling of toxic substances; set up programs for Rubella and Rh factor screening and for PKU and other metabolic deficiencies; and place rooming houses and apartment buildings under Health Department regulations.

Water Pollution

The proposed water pollution measure will, according to department attorney Chuck O'Donnell, bring Montana into compliance with federal law, so that the state can take over the permit system now controlled by the federal agency.

O'Donnell said present Montana water pollution law does not permit inspectors access to the premises or to records that polluting companies are required to keep.

Air Pollution

Another bill affecting water pollution law would allow the attorney general to file a civil suit against offenders. Existing law calls for actions to be filed by county attorneys.

Air pollution laws also would be strengthened by a bill allowing either a county attorney or the attorney general to enter a case.

Rubella and Rh Factor

Rubella immunity and Rh factor would be screened as a result of a bill that would amend the definition of the standard test to obtain a marriage license.

Dr. Robert Welch, head of the Family Planning bureau, said the law would make certain that every woman has the benefit of knowing whether she is susceptible to Rubella or might have a child with Rh disease.

Both Rubella and Rh factor are known to cause birth defects such as hearing, eye and heart disorders and mental retardation. One out of three women who contract Rubella in their first trimester of pregnancy will have a defective child, according to Dr. Welch.

One out of eight marriages in the U.S. results in the possibility of Rh factor problems: the marriage of an Rh positive man to an Rh negative woman.

(Continued on Page 4)

Two pop bottle shapes—one contains pop, the other, an oil additive. Under the proposed Hazardous Substances Act, the additive manufacturer would have to change the shape of his bottle.

Phone Checks Help Elderly

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Missoulian has given Treasure State Health permission to reprint the following article written by Missoulian staffer Evelyn King.

The Telephone Reassurance Service is providing a valuable service in 29 other communities throughout Montana.

Suppose you are an elderly person living alone. Or a younger person, in the same situation, who has just returned from the hospital following surgery. You are perfectly capable of taking care of yourself.

But one day, something unexpected happens—you fall, break a hip, and can't reach the telephone. Or you have a relapse from your surgery and are too weak to help yourself. You might lie there for hours or even days before you are discovered.

No longer does any person living alone in Missoula need to fear such troubles. The American Red Cross has started a "Telephone Reassurance Service," which is available to any person living alone in the com-

Harriet Veazey, executive director of the Red Cross, said that groundwork for the service was established last winter by Dave Weaver, a student at the University. Students in the Social Welfare Department at the University are given the opportunity to serve two hours a week with the agency of their choice.

The director said the Red Cross had been considering the telephone service but had not had the time or volunteer help to contact those needing the service or set up a plan. Weaver devoted all his volunteer hours to the project. He contacted the Senior Citizens Center, the Missoula County Welfare Departmen and individuals to locate those persons living alone, who might want the service.

Of those contacted, seven persons thus far are taking advantage of the service.

The calling is handled through the Red Cross Office

(Continued on Page 2)

Puppies left in a city dog pound have a better chance of finding a home than older dogs or cats. Read about the burgeoning population problem pet owners are helping to cause on Page 3.

Vasectomy Not Too Bad

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following personal account was written by a man who had a vasectomy in January. He said the operation was a Christmas present from his wife. Related story on Page 4.

I must say that the very idea of someone—even a doctor—cutting on my scrotum was enough to make me cringe. But it wasn't bad. In fact, as I look back on it, the most traumatic part of the whole experience was sitting in the doctor's waiting room for two and a half hours. I wasn't sick like all the other people there, I told myself. Just looking at how profusely my palms were sweating proved I wasn't sick.

My wife and I have Rh incompatibility, which is to say that additional children beyond the two we have already might bring up some health problems. My wife and I are both 30 years old and we feel that a new arrival in our family would be at best inconvenient.

The doctors took me into his operating room where I took off my pants and lay on the table. He shaved a small section of my scrotum and then proceeded to describe to me what he was about to do. And then in the space of twenty minutes—he did it.

He located the vas deferens with his finger and then injected the area with some form of local anesthetic. I would say that this segment of the operation effected the most discomfort, although it was no more painful than many shots I have had.

Since the vas is located near the surface of the skin, a shallow and very short incision was made. The exposed vas was cut and both ends tied with two knots each. Three stitches closed the incision. The opposite side was done in like manner. I got up, dressed and drove home.

For the next three days I experienced minimal discomfort—much like the aftereffect of getting hit in the scrotum in a ballgame. Five days after the operation I had the stitches removed and I played in a basketball game that night with no pain or tenderness.

I would say that sexual intercourse was possible the same day of the operation but we waited a few days. I was happy to discover that sexual pleasure was not lessened and that my sexual potential was not affected.

So I'm glad that I had the vasectomy. So is my wife.

TREASURE STATE HEALTH

OFFICIAL BULLETIN — STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Helena, Montana 59601

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MONTANA HEALTH

By Dr. Steven Kairys, Chief
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More Social Poisons

AMPHETAMINES

Amphetamines and their uses have proliferated to an amazing degree. Although current medical recommendations list amphetamines effective only in cases of hyperkinesis in children and narcolepsy, over 65 different amphetamine preparations are produced and estimated use totals 5 to 8 billion doses a year.

Amphetamines have been proven to be not effective for obesity control, for depressive reactions or for increased alertness.

Hazards of Amphetamines

1. Amphetamines are associated with the problems of tolerance buildup by the body and psychological dependence. The struggle to discontinue amphetamine use often is complicated by sensations of intense lethargy, depressive syndromes and suicidal feelings.
2. Behavioral toxicity is noted especially with high doses of amphetamines which cause hyperactivity, distortion of reality, impaired judgment, paranoia and hallucinations. Despite these disturbances the sensorium is clear and the individual may appear superficially normal.
3. Physical toxic effects of amphetamine use consist of gastrointestinal and urinary symptoms, high blood pressure, disturbances of the heart beat, malnutrition, hepatitis and severe infection if taken intravenously.

MARIJUANA

Marijuana is obtained from the hemp plant, Cannabis sativa. Hemp is an annual weed growing freely everywhere, including the entire United States. There are many varieties and there is a difference of 70 times between the most and least potent plants.

In the U.S. hashish and marijuana leaf are the preparations most commonly used. Hashish is prepared by collecting the resin or "sap" from the marijuana plant. Hashish in the form of a hard brown cake is ten times more potent than leaf marijuana.

Effects on Humans

Physical—Mild liver damage has been reported. Fetal damage has been produced in test animals. Pulse increases and the eyes redden.

Psychological—To most users the major effect is one of relaxation and tranquility. There is an awareness of being intoxicated not unlike that produced by alcohol. Time is slowed, visual imagery is increased, the appreciation of food, sex and music is intensified.

Mild states of intoxication may be quite undetectable. Tests have shown decreased ability to perform complicated tasks, overestimation of elapsed time and decreased physical coordination. Driving ability is not significantly altered. There is no physical or psychological dependence.

Chronic Adverse Reactions

Statistics indicate that marijuana users are more likely than non-users to try other drugs such as LSD. The relationship of marijuana use with future use of "hard" drugs such as heroin is less easily validated.

Acute Adverse Reactions

1. State of reactive fright and panic with paranoid ideation. Usually occurs in first time users but can occur after multiple use.
2. Toxic psychosis precipitated by marijuana is characterized by thought disorganization, paranoia and hallucinations that can last for days or weeks. These reactions can occur particularly in persons with a history of psychosis or use of hallucinogenic drugs.
3. "Flashbacks" can occur—refeeling the drug effect weeks after the last use.

Phone Calls...

(Continued from Page 1)

by the same volunteers who give service to military families, Mrs. Veazey said.

Subscribers to the telephone reassurance plan, which is free, fill out two information cards, one for the office and one for themselves. On the card, they give their name and address, the time they want to be called, the name and telephone numbers of a couple of neighbors who will be available for a "house check."

The subscriber is called each day, at a pre-arranged time. Or in some cases, the subscriber calls the volunteer. The telephone is allowed to ring numerous times. If no one answers, a call back is made within a short time. If there is still no answer, the volunteer will call the neighbor, and ask them to "check" on the subscriber.

Some telephone reassurance plans have not been successful in the past, Mrs. Veazey said, because instead of having a neighbor make a house check, the police were called. People are very reluctant to have a police car seen at their home, and thus, some who needed the service refused to take advantage of it.

Since the service project began, Mrs. Veazey said, the volunteers have only had to call neighbors three times, and in each case, the subscribers happened to be outside working in their yards when the calls were made.

Mrs. Veazey said some of the elderly people seem to look forward to the daily call and have become very friendly. However, she said they are not persistent, and when told by the volunteer, "Have a good day and we'll talk to you again tomorrow," they cheerfully terminate the conversation.

Mrs. Lena Eley, 87, is one of the enthusiastic subscribers. She has lived alone in her own home for more than 30 years, but said she really didn't start worrying about the fact until a couple of years ago.

She fell and broke an ankle. For a time, she was in a wheelchair, then a walker, and crutches, before she was able to walk on her own again. "I just don't get around as well as I used to," she declared.

"When that young man first came to my house and told me about the service, I was skeptical. But it has worked out just fine. And I am always getting myself into some pickle, so it is nice to know if I can't answer the phone someone will be looking in on me."

One "pickle" she described happened just the other day. She was reaching up to water some flowers in a window box when, "My foot slipped—one leg went this way and one that. I just bruised myself a little but as I was climbing out from under the chair and table, I was thinking I could never have reached the phone if I was really hurt."

As it is set up now, the plan operates Monday through Friday. But if a subscriber wants the service on the weekends, a call could be arranged, according to the director.

The service could also be a help to families with an elderly person living with them. The director said that often these people are reluctant to leave the older person alone when they leave town for a weekend or a vacation. She said arrangements could be made with the telephone service to have the calls made on these occasions.

The idea for the first "Telephone Reassurance Service" began in 1957 in Saginaw, Mich. In May of that year, Mrs. Elsie Davitt, 72, spent eight agonizing days lying on her kitchen floor, the victim of a paralyzing stroke. The telephone rang, the radio blared, drowning out her cries for help.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Grace McClure, a life-long friend, telephoned repeatedly. When Mrs. Davitt still did not answer, Mrs. McClure called the next-door neighbor and asked her to make a personal check.

"Don't worry, I'm sure she's all right," the neighbor replied (without making a personal check), "I can hear her radio playing."

Several days went by before Mrs. McClure became so alarmed she checked the house herself. There she found her friend helpless and barely alive. Rushed to the hospital, Mrs. Davitt lived another 18 months, but she never fully recovered from her ordeal.

Mrs. McClure blamed herself. If only she had been more persistent. If only she had checked earlier. She thought there must be some way to avoid such tragedies—so the idea was born. Why not initiate a calling service for older people? She enlisted the support of friends and a telephone answering service which offered cooperation. Thus it was on Aug. 15, 1957, Mrs. McClure, herself widowed, 76, and living alone, received the first call ever made under a telephone reassurance plan.

We Get Letters

Following are some more excerpts from correspondence received by the department's Records and Statistics Bureau:

ALIVE AND KICKING

"I find after growing through the perils of childhood, the agonized waverings of adolescence, the joys of wedded bliss, the trials and tribulations of motherhood, and the onset of middle-age spread—that now I am informed I was 'STILLBORN!'"

"As I see it, the question is NOT, as Hamlet said, 'To be or not to be?'; BUT rather, 'Is I is—or is I ain't?'"

"I hope that it will not be necessary to send a notarized doctor's (or coroner's) statement to the effect that I am ALIVE and KICKING."

UNCONTROLLABLE CIRCUMSTANCES

"I would like to secure my daughter's birth certificate or a photostatic copy of same . . .

"I am concerned that the birth certificate does not indicate that my daughter was illegitimate. The fact that she was born out of wedlock was due to circumstances beyond my control at the time."

WHIST BABY

"My mother, attending a whist tourney, had me March 28, 1908 (or 1909) . . . I do not know the name of the county. It must have been reachable by railway—mother wasn't the amazon she thought she was."

BETTER THAN NEVER?

"The name should be without the 'e' on the end. I have been meaning to send these Birth certificates back for correction for some time(!).

"Now that our two little boy darlings are seniors in college, I figured I better get it done."

INDIGNANT SENIOR

"Isn't it about time you public officials woke up and started doing your work, if you have any, and stop the unnecessary foolishness you are so busy at?

"Is it my fault no birth records were kept at the time of my birth? Common sense would tell you it is impossible to find someone alive that may have been in the room at the exact minute I was born . . .

"My Marine Service Record has been sufficient evidence that I was born . . . My School census record shows I was in school and 9 years old in 1904. My voting record shows I have resided and paid taxes in Montana all my life. Now if I haven't a right to a birth certificate—Send the papers I have already sent to your office, and my dollar bill and go straight to hell."

Pets—The New Population Explosion

Americans are a strange people. They spend an estimated $3 billion annually on pet food and $15 million alone on such things as flea collars for their beloved pets.

But 40 million dogs and cats each year are abandoned along country roads, turned out into the streets or shunted off to the local pound. Another 25 million animals are killed soon after birth.

The Humane Society of the United States estimates that 10,000 unwanted cats and dogs are born every hour in the U.S. It amounts to a new population explosion.

MISSOULA

Even a city the size of Missoula has a serious problem of unwanted pets.

According to Barbara Dahlgren of the Missoula Humane Society, it is mathematically impossible to place all the animals the Missoula shelter accepts every year.

"We accepted 8,000 dogs and cats last year. No matter how beautiful these animals are, there is just no way we can place them all," she said.

"We used to assure people who brought litters in to the shelter that we'd find them homes. Now we don't promise a thing."

City laws concerning stray dogs vary from town to town but generally, dogs have three to five days' stay at the pound before they are destroyed.

"We've become a destruction center. It is something the public has forced on us," she said.

Mrs. Dahlgren estimates that the shelter places 50 per cent of the dogs and 25 to 35 per cent of the cats it receives and destroys the remaining 2,000 dogs and up to 3,000 cats.

"People have the attitude that if their pet dies they'll simply get another one," she said. "They don't place any value on the life of an animal."

BILLINGS

The Humane Society of Billings finds homes for 25 to 30 dogs and 10 to 15 cats a month but cannot keep pace with the number of animals taken in by the Billings Animal Shelter.

The shelter killed 4,218 dogs and cats in 1972 and found homes for another 2,165 dogs. No record is kept of cat placements.

HELENA

Things are no better in Helena. In 1972, the Helena Animal Shelter killed 650 dogs and 550 cats.

Three members of the Lewis and Clark Humane Society working solely on finding homes for animals managed to place only 98 cats and 160 dogs in 1972.

"It is a pitiful situation," said Mrs. Vi Calmettes, one of the workers. "One litter after another comes in."

Unwanted animals are not only a problem for the kindly people who man the humane society phones. Strays often are carriers of disease.

And a study by a Johns Hopkins University researcher indicates that stray dogs soon take on the characteristics of their cousins, the wolves, and form hunting packs.

BIRTH CONTROL

Birth control could supply the answer to the burgeoning problem. Two forms of birth control for pets are in the testing stage, implants and annual shots.
ation is helping finance the pilot

The American Human Associbirth control programs. San Mateo County, California, began a test program using annual shots in April of 1972. An implant trial program is being carried on in Oregon.

NEUTERING

But for now, surgical neutering is the only solution and it is an expensive one. Veterinarians often charge $25 to $35 to spay a bitch, depending on its size and age, and $20 for a male dog. Neutering a cat can cost $10 for a male and $25 for a female.

Since most towns do not have laws concerning stray cats, city pounds do not have adequate holding areas for them. Cats tend to be sent to the gas chamber sooner than dogs.

The gas chamber for dogs and cats runs on carbon monoxide from car engine exhaust. The exhaust is filtered through a water tank to remove heat and odors before it is piped into the chamber.

Health Legislation . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

Rh disease can be controlled by supplying the mother with medication to prevent her body from building up a sensitivity to her baby's blood.

Infant Screening Bill

The proposed Infant Screening Bill will deal with Phenylketonuria (PKU) and other metabolic disorders in infants, some of which can be treated.

Dr. Welch said the bill would involve the staff of the Boulder River School who would offer genetic counseling to families in which genetic abnormalities exist. The bill also would make mandatory genetic screening tests for every baby born in the state.

Hazardous Substances

The Hazardous Substances Act would empower the Health Department to remove hazardous toys and substances from the market and to require that dangerous substances be labeled.

Toys that were found to present an electrical, mechanical or thermal hazard would be removed from the market.

Bleach, household cleaners and many common chemicals would have new labels containing such information as the name and address of the manufacturer, the name of each substance in the container which is hazardous, the words "danger," "warning" or "caution" on the label depending on the toxicity of the product, a description of the hazard, first aid instructions and instructions for handling or storing the product.

Apartment Buildings

A proposed amendment to the law governing hotel licensing would bring apartment buildings, rooming houses and retirement homes under the hotel licensing law.

The amendment provides that any apartment building with more than three boarders must comply with state regulations.

The amendment would close a loophole hotel owners have been using to escape state building and fire codes.

The bill would require owners of apartment buildings to install safety devices similar to those required in hotels—smoke barriers to keep exits clear of smoke, alarm systems and emergency hallway lighting.

More Women Of Every Age Going to Work

According to a recent New York Times News Service article, women outnumber men now as never before in this century.

Although more boys are born than girls, women are more numerous at every level over 20 years of age because of increases in the death rate for young men. There are 100 women for every 95 men according to the 1970 census—meaning approximately 5.4 million more women than men in this country.

Where only about 26 per cent of working-age women worked back in 1940 now 40 per cent are holding down jobs. The biggest employment gains were posted by women aged 35 to 65 returning to work after their children grew up.

The proportion of working women in factory jobs decreased, the article says, while the proportion in professional, service and clerical jobs increased. Even while more women are geting into professional and technical jobs, however, their salaries have not been as good as those of men holding down identical jobs.

Women, are article states, are marrying later with the median age of marriage now about 21. And these women are less inclined to have children right away or to have many children. Some are even electing to have no children at all.

Vasectomies on Increase

Wholesale male voluntary sterilization is a recent phenomenon in the United States.

Until the late 1960's, 60 to 70 per cent of the relatively few persons who did seek sterilization in this country were women.

But the situation has changed dramatically. Health records show that in 1967, fewer than 50,000 voluntary vasectomies were performed in the United States. In 1970, more than 700,000 vasectomies were performed.

The mass rush to permanent sterilization has caused some unforeseen problems. Blue Cross of California reported in 1971 that an "explosive" increase in hysterectomies and vasectomies was seriously endangering the company's ability to pay medical claims.

Sampling 260,000 of its subscribers, California Blue Cross said hysterectomy operations of the group had increased 79 per cent in 1970 over 1969 and vasectomies were up 125 per cent in the same time period.

Medical observers point out that much of the mass switch to permanent birth control measures may have been brought about by the much-publicized Senate hearings of 1970 held by Sen. Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin who threw millions of birth control pill users into a turmoil by calling witness after witness to testify about potential dangers of the Pill.

Testimony indicated that the Pill had never been adequately tested on animals and humans to discover its safety. The Pill, hailed as the answer to the overpopulation problem, was rushed into production and into general use with the reasoning, critics charged, that mankind couldn't wait long enough for proper tests.

Critics of medical practice in 1973 are now suggesting the same hastiness is turning the vasectomy into a household word when its safety has not been demonstrated.

Reseachers suspect that some vasectomized men may undergo changes in their immunology systems that will leave them poorly protected against infection.

Since 1968, a Florida physician, Dr. H. J. Roberts, has reported in a number of medical journals that he has treated men suffering from disorders including serious episodes of blood clotting and prolonged fevers, enlargement of lymph glands, skin disorders and recurrent infections.

Dr. Roberts reports that these men had nothing in common except two things: all had been in good health prior to their sudden medical problems and all had had vasectomies.

Although Dr. Roberts is among the first to point out the sketchiness of his evidence, four universities and at least two medical research centers have begun studies of male sterilization to assess its potential long-range effects.

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Volatile ether accounts for this toy bird's dipping action. Ether also makes this a hazardous toy. If the glass bird were broken, a child could inhale harmful ether fumes.

HEALTH BRIEFS

(Chicago)—Students at the University of Chicago have been taught how to control the secretion of acid in their stomachs, leading to the hope that one day patients will be able to prevent or cure their ulcers by mind power.

The students were told, in effect, to apply mind over body and that they would be paid a monetary reward, depending on their degree of success.

(Anchorage)—The hunting of several northern species of animals has been banned to all but Alaska natives.

The new Federal Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 makes the Secretary of the Interior responsible for protecting polar bears, walrus and otters, while the Secretary of Commerce is charged with protection of whales, sea lions and dolphins.

(Washington, D.C.)—The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union and the Ralph Nader-backed Health Research Group have asked the Labor Department to take emergency action to prevent industrial workers from being exposed to cancer-causing chemicals.

Most of the chemicals named in the petition were used in dyes, textile fibers and insecticides.

(Naples, Fla.)—The Seminole Indians may set up a school for medicine men using part of a $60,000 grant the tribe has received from the National Institute of Mental Health.

There are only three or four medicine men left in the tribe, all in their 60's and 70's.

(Helena)—Montana automobile dealers have come out in favor of the junk car removal law proposed by the Department of Health and Environmental Sciences.

The executive committee of the Montana Automobile Dealers Association said car dealers "can no longer stand by and let junked cars destroy our environment."

(Boston)—Medical researchers at Harvard University have succeeded in replacing the blood of 35 rats with an artificial blood containing fluorocarbon compounds.

The rats survived the 100 per cent transfusion without any apparent ill effects. The research team plans to test the artificial fluid next on monkeys.

If you've gone to ridiculous extremes to get rid of hiccups and failed to get instant relief, you may be interested in the claim three doctors made recently in the New England Journal of Medicine.

In a letter to the journal, the doctors said hiccup sufferers need no longer stick their heads in a paper bag or gulp water. To get rid of hiccups, they say, just swallow a spoonful of granulated sugar.

According to the doctors, their foolproof method has been known for some time but nobody bothered to publicize it before.